



PHOTO: STAR

Police intercepting a 14-party procession in Netrakona (Left) and resisting party men from entering the election office compound in Satkhira yesterday. The opposition staged demonstrations across the country rejecting the draft voter list. (Story on Page-16)

8-men syndicate smuggles fuel thru' S-W borders

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

An eight-member syndicate is allegedly involved in smuggling fuel through different borders in south-western region of the country.

Three oil depots in Khulna are virtually in the grip of the eight-member syndicate headed by two top leaders of Khulna Divisional Tank Lorry Workers' Union and Bangladesh Oil Distributors' Association, sources said.

Members of the syndicate are take delivery of diesel and kerosene illegally from these depots and smuggle those out of the country. Some officials of the oil depots are

involved with the syndicate.

Talking to this correspondent, a top leader of Khulna Divisional Tank Lorry Workers' Union, who often goes to India on the plea of treatment, admitted that he is involved in smuggling of diesel and kerosene out of the country.

"A section of police and intelligence and energy ministry officials are also our beneficiaries", he said.

The sources said that most of the 74 filling stations within eight kilometres of borders in Jessore and Satkhira districts are in the grip of these two notorious fuel smugglers. These filling stations are helping smuggling of diesel, kerosene and

octane.

Most of these oil depots get fuel supplies in excess of their demand, which is smuggled across the border by the syndicates through underhand deals, the sources said.

Even, a section of officials of an oil depot in Khalishpur are involved in supplying diesel and kerosene in large quantities to the smugglers, they said. Obviously, smugglers offer prices more than the government fixed ones and the extra quantities find their way through the border while users suffer in the country, the sources said.

Woman drug peddler flees custody

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Kishoreganj*

An under-trial woman prisoner fled from police custody in the balcony of court building in Kishoreganj yesterday.

Fatema Akther, 25, accused in a drug case, was produced before the court of Additional Sessions Judge Md Rezaul Karim from hearing of bail petition. Her bail appeal was rejected by the court, court sources said.

She was kept standing on the balcony by police, who were waiting for a prison van to take her to jail.

Three constables were suspended in this connection. They are Abdul Hye (1), Chan Mia and Abdul hye (2), police said.

40 hurt in Muladi BNP factional clashes

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Barisal*

At least 40 people including a police man were injured, three of them critically, when rival factions of ruling BNP clashed for several hours at Muladi upazila headquarters yesterday, centring wall writings to campaign for the visit of party senior joint secretary Tarek Zia.

Tarek Zia is scheduled to visit Hizla-Muladi area on May 15.

The rival factions are led by local lawmaker Mosharrif Hosssain Mongu and Zainal Abedin, central

BNP law secretary.

Three of the critically injured BNP activists were brought to Barisal Sher-e-Bangla Medical College Hospital.

They are Muladi upazila Krishok Dal secretary Shahjahan Reza, Md Abdul Ali, and Solaiman, all belonging to the faction led by Zainal. The rest were being treated at Muladi Upazila Health Complex, reports from there said.

Police batoned the clashing groups and brought the situation under control.

A police team has been deployed at the upazila headquarters to avert further violence, official sources reached from here said.

Sources said activists belonging to Mongu group earlier prepared the wall of Hizla Upazila Parishad for writing slogans in favour of their group.

On Tuesday, Zainul group men wrote party slogans on those in the name of their leaders. This created tension between the groups.

On Wednesday morning, two activists of Mongu group erased the paintings and started writing on the wall in favour of their group.

Hearing the news, rival activists armed with lethal weapons attacked each other, ensuing clashes marked with chase and counter-chase.

The injured included upazila Krishok Dal secretary Shahjahan Reza and upazila BNP secretary Nawab Chowdhury.

When contacted in the afternoon, Hizla thana Officer-in-Charge Abdur Rahman said that the situation was under control and that police were deployed at the upazila headquarters and nearby area.

The rival factions blamed each other for the clashes.

Zainul was in Dhaka and Mongu was in the area when the clashes took place, sources said.

Tk 3.5 cr venom, touchstone statues seized

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Rajshahi*

Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) seized two pounds of venom and two black touchstone idols of Hindu goddesses worth Tk 3.50 crore from Natore on Tuesday.

The venom worth about Tk one crore contained in a bottle was found in an abandoned condition in the Duttapara Degree College field.

The idols, one weighing 162 kilograms and the 71 kilograms, worth about 2.50 crore were recovered from near a temple in Dighapatia area.

But none could be arrested, they said.

Udichi blast case hearing on May 25

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Jessore*

Argument in the sensational Udichi bomb blast case was not held in the court of District Sessions and Special Judge yesterday as two of the accused did not appear before the court.

Judge Abul Hossain fixed May 25 for the next hearing.

At least 10 people were killed and over 100 injured in the horrific incident when unidentified terrorists blasted several bombs during the 12th national conference of Udichi Shipi Gorthi at Jessore Town Hall ground on the night of March 6, 1999.



PHOTO: STAR

Bangladesh National Women Law Association (BNWLA) formed a human chain at Shaheeb Bazar in Rajshahi city yesterday protesting alleged sexual abuse of a Rajshahi University student by a teacher.

Fresh lists of terrorists, smugglers being made

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, *Khulna*

Khulna Metropolitan Police (KMP) and district police are preparing fresh lists of 'terrorists' as directed by the ministry of home affairs.

Preparation of the lists is expected to be completed in a week, said sources in KMP and district police.

The lists will include names of their godfathers and beneficiaries in political parties and police department.

The fresh lists will contain many new names over the previous lists prepared last year, they said.

The earlier lists contained names of 216 terrorists in Khulna city and

1,110 in the district. Of them, 19 were killed in encounters and four were killed India.

A senior official KMP said a fresh combing operation will be launched after checking and rechecking of the lists and getting it approved by the home ministry. "We will spare none on the fresh lists", he said.

Besides, separate lists of smugglers and drug traffickers are also being prepared and a drive will be launched soon to nab them. The lists will include names of fuel smugglers and hundi traders, the sources said.

Ukhiya TV relay station opens this month

OUR CORRESPONDENT, *Cox's Bazar*

The Ukhiya relay station of Bangladesh Television (BTV) is likely to begin transmission this month, fulfilling a long cherished desire of the people coastal areas and off shore islands.

People of Moheshkhali, Teknaf, Ukiya, St. Martin and Khutobdiya islands will enjoy programmes of BTV and BTV World through the relay station.

Prime Minister Khaleda Zia is likely to inaugurate the relay station during her May 21-22 visit to Cox's Bazar, according to its in-charge Asraf Ahamed.

The relay complex with a 1.50 metre high tower atop has been built on a 4.3526 acre land at a cost of Tk 12.79 crore, he said.

The cost was initially estimated at Tk 13.43 crore, which escalated due to delay in implementation of the project, he said.

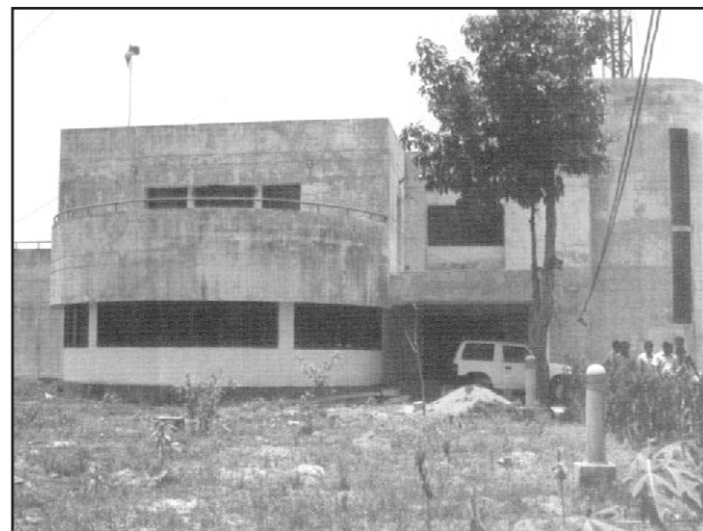


PHOTO: STAR

The Ukhiya TV relay station awaiting inauguration.

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